

OUTGOING MESSAGE

Approved For Release 2003/08/08 : CIA-RDP78S01932A000100050035-5

25X1

SIGNAL CENTER USE ONLY

AGE COI ACP TOG TPE WRO TRI

SCM 0 0 0 0 0 0

CLASSIFICATION

CIA/OCT/WHIZ 740523

MESSAGE HANDLING INDICATOR

DATE-TIME GROUP

CITE

MESSAGE REFERENCE NUMBER

25X1D1A

CIA/WHIS

SOURCE REF:

1	4	7	10
2	5	8	11
3	6	9	12

TO: IMMEDIATE WHITE HOUSE//SITUATION ROOM FOR MR PATRICK
STATE RCI//OPERATIONS CENTER OF FBI, WHCC//ATTENTION
CIA REP, TREASURY DEPT//INFO FOR [REDACTED]

25X1

ITER NO: 2

DATE: 23 MAY 1970

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT TO SYRIA BY SOVIET LEADER

25X1

IN THE WAKE OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD'S RED CARPET RECEPTION
IN MOSCOW IN APRIL, THERE HAS BEEN PRESS AND DIPLOMATIC SPECULATION
THAT BREZHNEV WOULD SOON MAKE A VISIT TO DAMASCUS. ON MAY 9
PRESS REPORTS QUOTED "INFORMED SYRIAN SOURCES" THAT THE PARTY
CHIEF WOULD VISIT BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH. BREZHNEV SENT

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NSA review completed

FORM 4C
4-73

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ASAP A PERSONAL LETTER, THE CONTENTS OF WHICH ARE NOT KNOWN, ON MAY 8.

THERE IS NO RELIABLE INFORMATION, HOWEVER, THAT BREZHNEV WILL MAKE SUCH A VISIT. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, BREZHNEV'S CALENDAR IS OPEN FOR THE NEXT WEEK, SO A TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST CANNOT BE RULED OUT ON THE BASIS OF PRIOR COMMITMENTS. BREZHNEV HAS NOT BEEN TO THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE BECOMING PARTY CHIEF IN 1964, AND HE SEEMS TO HAVE MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT NOT TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF TOO DIRECTLY IN THORNY MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS.

THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY ACTIVE IN MIDDLE EASTERN DIPLOMACY IN RECENT MONTHS. IN ADDITION TO ASAD'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, GROMYKO HAS MADE TWO TRIPS TO DAMASCUS. GROMYKO HAS VISITED IRAQ AND IS SLATED TO GO TO ALGERIA SOON, AND LIBYAN PRIME MINISTER JALLUD RECENTLY WAS IN MOSCOW. A TRIP BY BREZHNEV OR THE OTHER TOP LEADERS TO DAMASCUS WOULD BE A LOGICAL CONTINUATION OF THIS SOVIET EFFORT TO ASSERT THEIR ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ISOLATE PRESIDENT SADAT AND CONSOLIDATE RELATIONS WITH SYRIA.

THE PURPOSE OF A TRIP BY A SOVIET LEADER AT THIS TIME WOULD

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LARGELY DEPEND ON THEIR READING OF THE STATE OF THE DISENGAGEMENT TALKS. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME HINTS IN THE SOVIET PRESS THAT MOSCOW THINKS AN AGREEMENT IS NEAR. IF SO, THE SOVIET MIGHT EXPECT TO GET SOME CREDIT IF A GOLAN AGREEMENT IS SIGNED WHILE A TOP LEADER IS IN DAMASCUS. SUCH CREDIT, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE TO BE BALANCED AGAINST THE IMAGE OF A TOP KREMLIN LEADER IN A SUBSERVIENT ROLE TO SECRETARY KISSINGER. THIS IS A ROLE BREZHNEV WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO AVOID.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE SOVIET THINK THEY COULD SUCCESSFULLY WIEGH IN WITH THE SYRIANS AGAINST AN AGREEMENT AT THIS TIME, THEY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE CAST IN THE PUBLIC ROLE OF OBSTRUCTING A SETTLEMENT. BREZHNEV WOULD PROBABLY ALSO WANT TO AVOID THIS ROLE. HE WOULD ALSO WANT TO AVOID THE PERSONAL SETBACK IF HE WENT TO DAMASCUS WITH THE PURPOSE OF THWARTING A DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT AND IT WAS NONETHELESS CONCLUDED.

SUCH CONSTRAINTS WOULD APPLY LESS TO FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO.

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